MERCHANDISING *the* PLUMBING BUSINESS

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MERCHANDISING THE PLUMBING BUSINESS

MERCHANDISING *the* PLUMBING BUSINESS

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PROLOGUE

THE following pages contain many things that will not be agreeable to those progressive plumbers who are already merchants.

It is the wish of the author to say to these men that a condition such as exists in the plumbing field is not judged by the few, but by the many. Those who have realized the opportunities of merchandising the plumbing business will be looked upon as the ideal to which others may aspire.

If this book serves its purpose, and helps others to achieve more quickly this qualification, we will have more progressive plumbers, there will be more profit, more pleasure for those who have pioneered, and the public will have a greater respect for the trade as a whole.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS is the age of efficiency. In almost every line of industry old-fashioned and obsolete practices are being replaced by efficient methods. It is, therefore, not remarkable that the plumbing business should be modernized.

As a matter of fact, it is remarkable that it was not done years ago. Everyone connected with this interesting business is keenly aware of the fact that, in a large measure, the sanitary and hygienic condition of American homes is due to the progress made by the plumbing industry.

The average individual engaged in the plumbing business has been so busy doing the actual work that he has not had time to keep up to the minute. Then, too, the work is mechanical, and often it happens that a mind trained to mechanics does not easily grasp the business angle.

That there are exceptions to this rule is evidenced by the fact that the trade is awakening to the opportunities of modern business. But we speak of the great majority of the plumbing trade and that means, manufacturers, supply houses and master plumbers.

There is need for a keener knowledge of the opportunities in the plumbing business as a business proposition.

The public knows too little about the plumbing business, and until the curtains are drawn aside and the plumber is shown in his true light as a merchant and a sanitary engineer, the public will not accord him its good will.

This book is written in the hope that it will make a little clearer some of the opportunities that exist and also that it may suggest some ideas that will help those interested in the plumbing business to get the most out of their work.

CHAPTER I

What Does the Public Know About the Plumbing Business?

THE public knows less about the plumbing business than it does about almost any other line of endeavor. About the only business men outside of the trade who have any definite knowledge of the business are the building contractors and architects, and these people too often have only wrong opinions.

But the public, as a whole, knows absolutely nothing of the business. It has a general impression that the plumber is some kind of a high-class workman, a man who is called in when something breaks in the water system. This is a natural thing for them to think, because a majority of people do not build their own homes. They are built by construction companies and the owners buy them complete and finished. Their only contact with the plumber is for repair work.

Another reason is the fact that the most important part of the sanitary engineer's work is hidden behind the walls and covered up with plaster. Because the plumber usually makes a flat price for his work and includes the fixtures, the public sees only the fixtures and does not stop to realize the value of the work hidden in the floors and the walls.

Most cities have sanitary codes and laws, and before a plumber can qualify to become a master plumber he must know these rules thoroughly. He must be able to interpret them into terms of practical sanitary engineering. There is not one person in a thousand who is acquainted with this fact. American homes are well equipped with proper drainage; vents and traps are placed with an understanding that guards the occupants of buildings from bad odors and disease; but the public does not realize that the plumber is responsible for all this.

You hear it said every day in the trade that the plumber is in a large measure responsible for the health of the community. But this is a generality, and even if one of the laity hears of it, it never means anything to him.

The matter of water pressure is another thing that requires technical knowledge. Just stop to realize what it means to distribute water at an even pressure all over a big building. It's true that architects' specifications show where water lines should go, but what architect knows the details of fittings and sizes of pipe that are necessary to properly execute his drawings into a practical, operating supply system?

Truly, the public knows nothing of the plumbing business. Outsiders probably know less of this business than they know about any other of the trades in which mechanics are engaged.

CHAPTER II.

Sanitation and Hygiene.

MOST people engaged in the sanitary plumbing business are dimly aware of the fact that the health of the community is largely due to good plumbing; but few realize definitely how this is accomplished.

A sanitary toilet means much more than just a good toilet bowl and seat. A clean inviting seat helps the individual pass off the waste from the body because of the cleanliness of the seat. An uninviting seat and toilet causes the individual to hold his feces in the body, thus causing a poisoning of his system. This lowers his vitality and causes a loss of ability and general usefulness. In a factory this loss may be computed in actual money. Clean toilets mean to the factory an actual increase of ability of its force of employees.

The drinking fountain is but little understood. Medical science teaches us that the body should at all times be kept at an even temperature. Water should not be iced, but cooled so that it will not produce cramps.

Drinking water with meals and after meals helps digestion, helps keep the body at normal temperature

and assists the body in throwing off waste matter through the pores, the bowels and the kidneys.

This again is a matter which the factory may figure on the basis of dollars.

Then there's the element of time saved. If each factory had drinking fountains distributed at regular intervals, just figure how much actual working time would be saved by the employees who must now walk hundreds of feet for a drink, and the same distance back again to their work.

One of the most important items in the plumbing business, in the matter of hygiene, is the lavatory, both in the home as well as in the office or factory.

Many doctors say that the greatest advance in medicine and surgery was when physicians learned to wash their hands. Before they learned the value of washing the hands, disease was carried from one patient to another.

The hands constantly coming into contact with disease germs without being washed transferred them to the next object they touched or handled.

If one person in the home brings in a disease germ on the hand, contracted by hanging onto a car strap or from coming into contact with money that was handled by a diseased person, soon that germ will be spread to every member of the family.

Doctors have warned us that after the use of the

toilet, we should particularly use great care in washing the hands. The fecal matter from our bodies is loaded with disease germs. Hence, there should be ample facilities near the toilet for washing the hands.

Truly few of us have understood the value of having a clean and inviting sanitary lavatory for frequent use.

Then comes the question of bathing. I quote from a recent speech by Doctor Thomas Darlington, ex-commissioner of health for the City of New York. "What do shower baths mean? Simply to keep clean? No, nothing of the kind. I speak of energy and getting tired. If people, when they become very tired after a hard day's work, could have a shower, they would quickly be relieved of much of this distressing fatigue. If you can strip off and get into a warm shower, use soap and get rid of all the dirt, then gradually turn off all the warm water until the water chills you; all the fatigue poisons will be driven into the blood and sent to the kidneys; then as you turn the warm water on again, it brings the blood to the surface of the skin. This dilutes the poisons and sends them out of the kidneys and out of the body. So much so that no matter how tired a person is at five o'clock in the afternoon, if he takes a shower of this kind and changes his clothes, the fatigue of the day is gone. He is then ready to enjoy his evening meal."

Every home should be equipped with a shower. Even if the bather wants to soak in a tub, a shower should be provided so that the disease and filth, which have been washed out of the pores of the skin, can be washed away and not rubbed into the skin again with a towel.

The subject of bacteria which accumulate on the teeth and infect the tonsils is a matter that should be thoroughly studied by the modern sanitary plumber.

What happens in almost every home in the morning? Every member of the family goes into the bath room and washes his teeth. Where? Into the lavatory. The bacteria that produce Bright's Disease, ulceration of the stomach and many other ailments just as deadly are washed from the mouth and ejected into the lavatory bowl.

Then the next member of the family comes along and washes face and hands in this disease-laden lavatory.

The manufacturers of sanitary fixtures have perfected some very practical dental lavatories for the purpose of washing the teeth and mouth. This particular sanitary appliance, although vital to the health of every home, is sadly lacking in the vast majority of houses. It is safe to say that not one per cent of the houses in America are equipped with dental lavatories.

These are some of the fundamentals in sanitation and hygiene that every plumber should know. Space does not permit a more thorough discussion, and the subject has only been skimmed over lightly. But enough has been recorded so that the sanitary engineer will have a slight idea of the vastness of his work and the vital necessity of acquainting the public with what he is trying to accomplish.

CHAPTER III.

Merchandising.

A NEW word is creeping into daily use in the plumbing business, and that is "merchandising." It means to buy and sell merchandise under modern business methods, to advertise, to create a market for better materials and to build good will.

Heretofore, the plumber was content to sell his customers almost anything they wanted to buy, and not knowing the relative value and service of the various plumbing fixtures, they demanded the cheaper kind under the impression that they were saving money.

Because the plumbing business was not advertised, the public knew very little about it. The plumber was more interested in the mechanical end of his business—the installations. When the plumber is asked for prices, usually he names a figure that covers a completed job, both the fixtures and the labor, and the customer has the impression that plumbing is expensive.

That plumbing is not expensive is known only to the plumbing fraternity. Ask anyone not engaged in the business what he thinks about prices in plumbing, and nine times out of ten he will begin by relating instances in which he claims he has been overcharged.

Now this condition is so universal that it has become a menace to the trade. The public must be taken into the confidence of the plumber. People should know, first of all, the separate costs of the labor, the materials and the fixtures. And perhaps the most important part of merchandising is this, that the materials must be *owned* and *displayed* by the plumber. No one thing lends itself to building confidence with the public like a good stock of merchandise.

The practice of selling out of a catalog must be abandoned at once. Likewise the practice of taking customers to the jobber's show rooms has a bad effect. When a plumber sells merchandise that he does not own; merchandise that is shown in some one else's catalog or displayed in some one else's show room, it is an admission that the plumber is interested in the labor. Hence the public thinks of the plumber from that viewpoint.

Two bath tubs in a catalog, with a fifty per cent difference in price, often look the same to the laity, and usually the cheaper is purchased; but display the same two fixtures side by side, and anyone with ordinary intelligence can see the difference in value.

Merchandising includes selling plans and advertising. As an example, a complete outfit for a bathroom, if displayed in the store or window, only arouses a passing curiosity. To make a display of this kind pay,

it must be sold quickly. There's too much investment involved to keep it longer than thirty or sixty days.

Consequently, it must be *merchandised,* or sold. To do this a sales plan must be evolved. Customers must be induced to come in and see the outfit. The merchant plumber must be well informed as to its value and how it will enhance the value of the home, its usefulness and practicability. He must have the price of the whole outfit and the price of each separate fixture at his finger ends. A complete set of accessory fixtures should accompany the display. The little things that go to make the bathroom convenient and comfortable are not generally recognized by the average plumber, but it is a psychological fact that, if these little extras are carefully selected so as to be in harmony and "talked up", upon their selection oftentimes the sale of the whole outfit will be consummated.

Your real estate man will tell you that often a cleverly arranged linen closet, or the way the kitchen is laid out, will help him sell a house. This is a big thought and it would be well for plumbing contractors to bear it in mind. This same idea of merchandising could be used to advantage by those contractors who specialize in factory work. Factory plumbing equipment set up in a show room, in a good setting, would sell at a better figure than illustrations and an estimate of cost.

Merchandising service should be a service of pleasure and profit to sanitary engineers. To sell a customer service (labor) is an interesting operation. The plumber's own experiences, plus the kind of men he employes, and the character of work they do, will overcome most objections to cost. The average citizen does not concern himself with the thought that he must pay an established price per hour, but he wants to know (and he is entitled to know) if he is getting his money's full worth when he pays for high-priced mechanics.

A merchandising plumber can *sell* his organization in such a way as to make the transaction a very pleasant and profitable one.

CHAPTER IV.

Window Display.

IT is probably true that all advertising is good, but some advertising is better. This is also true of show window advertising. Stop in front of the show windows of any large department store, look carefully into the detail of the display and the scenery used to bring out the value of the merchandise. Look at the lighting effects. This is all planned by an expert window trimmer who enjoys a big salary and usually has a corps of assistants. It will demonstrate the value these large merchandisers put upon their windows.

Now, because the plumbing business is essentially a neighborhood one, and consequently must depend upon show windows for publicity, it is a good investment to make a thorough study of this interesting advertising medium.

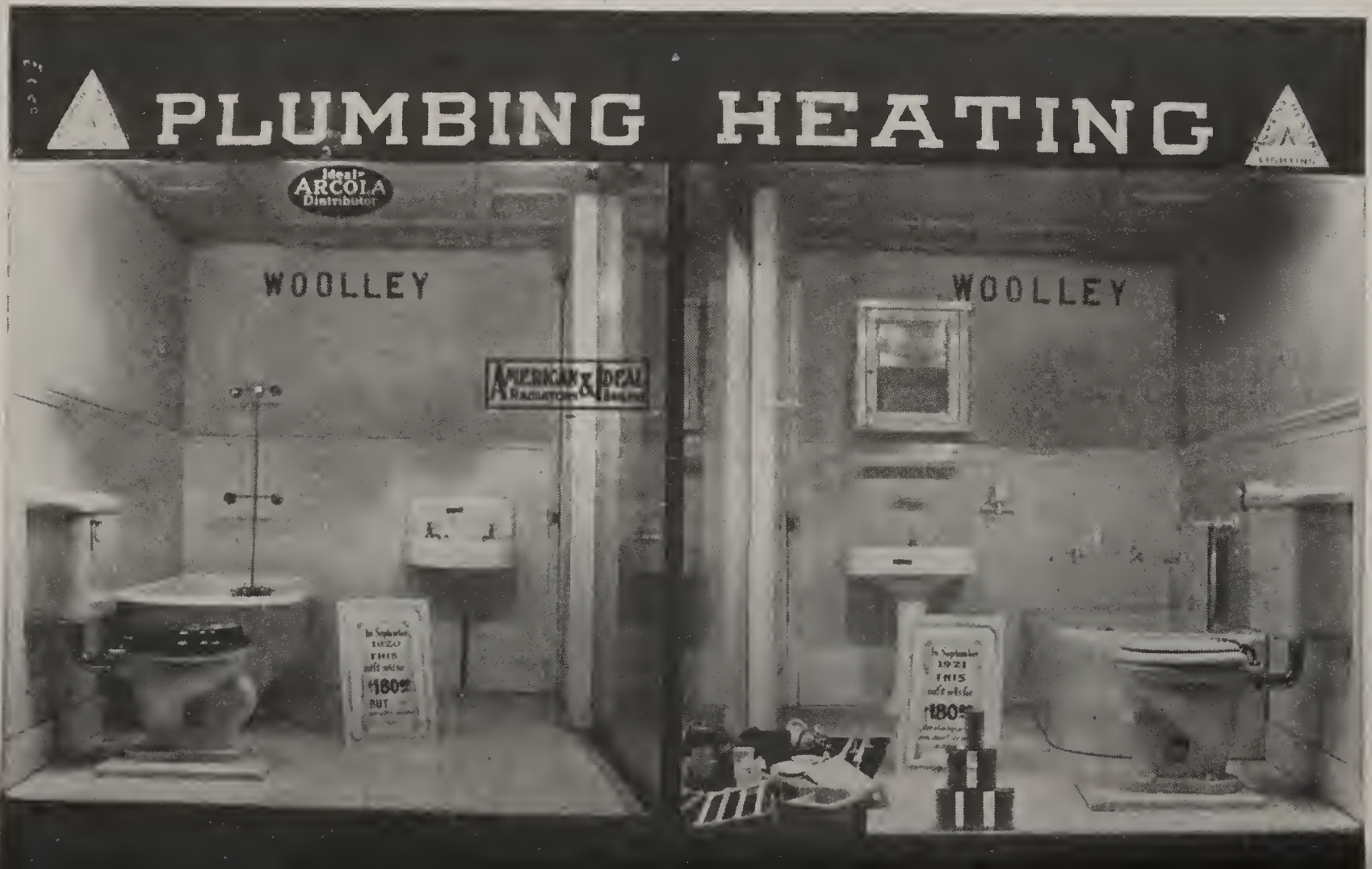
To create an interest in a window display, the first consideration must be a thorough knowledge of the kind of fixtures the people in the neighborhood can afford to buy. It does not do to jump to conclusions as to what people will or will not buy. This subject should only be decided after a canvass of the neighborhood stores. Learn what grade of merchandise other dealers are selling.

It does no harm to repeat the advice that window displays must be changed frequently. People who look at the window and see the same thing week after week pass by after a time without looking at all.

Plumbing has hundreds of attractive fixtures. Things that the average citizen does not realize are in existence. One very good way of keeping up an interest and having frequent changes is to display single fixtures, or a group of several grades of the same kind of fixtures. Tubs, showers, lavatories, kitchen sinks, and so on, should be alternated.

The background should be carefully selected to harmonize with the articles displayed. A fifty-word card with half-inch lettering should be prepared to go with the fixture or set up on an easel alongside of it. If the merchandise is one of the nationally advertised brands, then that fact should predominate in the story, because if there is one thing a window display will do more than any other thing, it is to cash in on advertising. Newspaper or magazine illustrations of plumbing merchandise cannot convey to the mind of the laity the real merit and value of the fixture like the article itself. It is also true that a customer having seen the article advertised in his favorite paper, and having read the advertisement, will always stop to look at the fixture with a new interest.

There is one basic thought that should always be kept in mind when preparing a window display. The public knows less about plumbing fixtures than any other merchandise used daily in the home. Therefore, while those engaged in the business are familiar with the various fixtures and accessories, it will pay to make sure that the consumer will recognize its function, either the way the article is shown or by a well-prepared sign that will make it clear to him.


PLUMBING HEATING
Ideal
ARCOLA
Distributor
WOOLLEY
AMERICAN & IDEAL
WOOLLEY

CHAPTER V.

The Problem of Price Tags.

THIS problem in the opinion of expert merchandising men, is the chief difficulty of the plumbing business and is at the bottom of a lot of failures. There are a lot of good looking plumbing store windows around the country; they don't sell goods because the price tag is lacking.

The American public is accustomed to buy everything it needs, except plumbing fixtures, through the price argument. And price argument does not mean cut-price or low priced, cheap merchandise.

There's a sales psychology about price tags that acts as a closing argument. A piece of merchandise with price attached is obviously for sale; it gives the prospective customer a feeling of security when he goes into the store to further negotiate the transaction, that the dealer is honest and above board; he has only one price. Then, if he starts with the price of the fixture established in his mind and is impressed with confidence in the dealer, the second step, or the sale of service, becomes an easy matter.

While on the subject of price, it may be well to say that the public really knows so little about the cost of plumbing fixtures that most prices are a revelation of reasonableness. And hence, it would be true that, if

every plumber displayed prices on fixtures shown in his window display, it would for all time kill the canard about the robber plumber.

In the show room a price tag should be attached to each fixture. Those dealers who have made a practice of this will confirm the statement that many sales of plumbing fixtures are made to customers who come into the store for some immediate necessity, and, seeing the price on a fixture, stop to buy it.

CHAPTER VI.

Showroom.

WE'VE been discussing the outward appearance of the store, the front. Now we'll step inside. To begin with one of the greatest crimes a store keeper can commit is to disappoint his prospective customers.

If the window is attractive, clean, and the store does not back it up, or if the merchandise advertised does not show to advantage, the customer will be hard to please, probably will not buy, or, if he does, he'll not come back.

Therefore, it is necessary that the inside of the showroom be properly arranged. It is not the quantity of merchandise that counts here, but the way it is displayed. Set each fixture so that the customer will have an accurate knowledge of how it will look in his home. Then see that each fixture is properly tagged with the maker's name, if it's an advertised article, and be sure to add a price tag.

It is especially recommended that at least two of each of the heavier plumbing fixtures be displayed to show contrast. If your customer comes in to look at a cheap tub and you have a better one standing alongside of it, it does not require much selling effort to show the difference in value.

The store should also carry as many accessories as the merchant can afford. These should be selected with care. The aim should be to show the best grade at all times, but never to force a sale. It is true of this class of merchandise that the best is the cheapest, and when showing samples, the customer should be so informed. A towel bar at $3, that lasts a lifetime is a good investment, and customers will buy if they are given the facts.

Every day the housewife finds that there's occasion to use the many useful bathroom trimmings. There's a never-ending market for this class of merchandise. It's safe to say that there is not one bathroom in a thousand that is equipped with fifty per cent of the needful accessories.

One of the reasons, that more bathroom accessories have not been sold by the plumbing trade, is that usually the plumber has these quick selling articles in a glass show case fastened to the wall and almost invariably out of the way. Then there are so many different fixtures in the case, and they are so close together that the average customer finds it difficult to single out the item wanted.

The best way is to have a combination counter and showcase with glass shelves, each article laid out separately. The customer may then indicate the one he is interested in. It may readily be lifted out by the

clerk and placed in the customer's hand. This close inspection helps quicker sales, and the customer buys something that he or she has actually weighed in the hand.

Medicine cabinets and mirrors form a beautiful setting for the store. These very necessary articles are very attractive. No bathroom is complete without a fine medicine cabinet with lots of room in it. Each bathroom should have an extra mirror or two.

Showers are in a field by themselves. The growing demand for a shower bath makes this branch of the accessory end of the business almost a separate business. Most everyone wants a shower bath; the portable fixture has a wide range of sale because it may be sold to owner or renter alike.

Bathroom scales are hard to find in plumbing stores, yet, if properly featured and shown, there would be one in every home. Bathing helps are in great demand —bath sprays and so on. And a complete stock of this kind of merchandise will always be one more reason why customers should come into plumbing stores.

CHAPTER VII.

Clerks in the Plumbing Store.

OF vital importance is the clerk in the plumbing store. In no other business in America today does the clerk know so little of the business he is engaged in. Call on most any plumbing store at random, anywhere, by phone or in person, and try to get some information from the clerk. In ninety per cent of the cases you'll be told that "when the boss comes in, a price will be made," or "the proprietor will tell you about the matter in question." This not only puts the plumbing business in a bad light, but it is wasting the time and ability of a lot of good productive citizens who would otherwise be usefully employed.

The example of the plumber who has a business of $50,000 a year, or less, is sufficient. There's probably an hour or two of bookkeeping a day, and the balance of the day is wasted. If these clerks do not accomplish anything, it is the employer's fault.

Because of an obsolete rule, these clerks are not permitted to tell customers the price of fixtures, with the result that unwittingly they daily create false impressions of the business in the minds of the public.

A little training would make these men and women valuable assistants. They are the plumber's contact with the public. They answer his telephone calls, greet

his customers, and meet the salesmen who call upon him. If they have been properly trained, they can make visitors feel welcome, and relieve their employers of much detail by knowing at all times the prices of fixtures and, in some cases, make estimates of installations.

The fact that the clerk can readily quote prices on fixtures would at once eliminate the impression that plumbers are high priced and that they have several prices on each article.

The clerk in a merchant plumber's store may also take charge of the retail selling, make the window displays and arrange the showroom.

This work alone should be very valuable both to the proprietor as well as to the clerk.

Very often the plumber employs cheap help in this department, because he thinks he cannot afford the best.

Once he becomes a merchant, he can employ good salaried clerks either on a straight salary or upon a salary and commission basis.

The commission form of payment is a good one in the plumbing business, because the process of selling merchandise is new and the extra money thus earned forms an incentive to produce results.

CHAPTER VIII.

Local Advertising.

BECAUSE the plumbing business is peculiarly a local one, or is, in most instances, the store located in a neighborhood community, it is not always profitable to advertise in the daily paper. This is especially true of the large cities. As a rule, this daily newspaper advertising is best, but for a store located away from the center of trade, it is rarely profitable.

To advertise his business, the community plumber must adopt methods that will give him the largest percentage of returns for his investment. Sometimes there's a local newspaper published in the neighborhood once a week. Because it contains items of local interest, people read it. The circulation is small and therefore the cost of advertising is not great.

To use a medium of this kind successfully, the size of space should be the first consideration. Small space used regularly will produce better results than large space used spasmodically.

Then comes the important thing, "copy"—the text. Upon this subject lots of advice may be given, but there's one kind of copy you can never go wrong on, and that is, copy of a serious kind. Usually "catch phrases" please only the man who writes them. Re-

member you are not trying to *amuse* your reader; you are trying to sell him services as a sanitary engineer.

In space of this kind it is best to have a leader. Take one item of general interest for which you know there is a universal demand, and that is nationally advertised. Make a "special" of it. Tell your trade that *you* have it. Mention that it's advertised in the "Saturday Evening Post" or whatever magazine you saw the advertising in.

Divide the bottom of your space into three or four small spaces, and show cuts of smaller items, things that people need. Keep in mind that these items are to bring people into your store to whom you will have the opportunity to show your complete stock.

The general appearance of the advertising should be clean, not mussy. Try to have the same kind of type used throughout the advertisement, although of various sizes. Avoid underscoring and don't write too much. Short, snappy sentences go farther than lengthy arguments.

Every once in a while, instead of the feature article, run an educational advertisement telling about your business and the kind of service you sell. Tell your trade about the kind of workmen you employ and that your customer's satisfaction is your chief desire.

The subject of good copy for the plumbing trade is practically without end. There has been so little ad-

vertising written about the plumbing business that, if each ad is carefully considered, it will actually be news to the public.

There are other kinds of advertising the plumbing merchant may do. Window displays and store planning have been discussed. The next is letter-writing. This is a part of the business that has been neglected by the plumbing trade. To begin with, we want to say emphatically, too many letters are an annoyance to the recipient. If your letters have a real message, however, they will be well received and arouse interest.

It may be well to advise the writer of letters not to expect direct results. Like any other form of advertising, results are achieved by the "follow up." In other words, advertising cannot take the place of salesmanship.

A good letter will create an interest for your merchandise or service and will make a point of contact for your personal call. It paves the way for your interview and enables you to get down to business with your client without waste of time.

Because of the elasticity of the medium it is probably the best form of publicity for the local merchant. The mailing list may be as large or small as the pocketbook or circumstances warrant.

Letters to prospective customers should include illustrations or pamphlets of the articles you are writing

about and should advise that the merchandise is on display at your store.

One dependable rule to follow in letter-writing is to be specific. Never try to infer anything—shoot straight from the shoulder.

Whenever possible, name prices. That is the kind of solicitation that breeds confidence. There's a false impression about confidence. Everywhere you hear the expression that this or that salesman is going to win somebody's confidence. Now confidence is not won; it is earned. It is something to work for.

Finally, the list of names selected will pay as much as you put into it. A good list, carefully selected, with every name spelled right, and in which everyone is a prospect and has ability to pay, will reward you for your effort.

CHAPTER IX.

Effect of Advertising.

WHAT are the effects of advertising? In the last chapter we said that advertising does not sell, and if it does not sell what is its function? Advertising creates an effect. It is one of the oldest forces known. The more you advertise, the more people will know you. When your advertising has been appearing in a community long enough, it will build goodwill. It informs people of your business, where it is located and what you sell.

Its first effect, therefore, is to inform. The merchandise, which you sell, represents the concrete thing you give the customer for his dollars, but your advertising represents the spirit of your institution. If the advertiser will always keep this idea in front of him when preparing advertising matter, he will surely go in the right direction.

The definition of advertising is that it is the constant reiteration of a fact or statement. If that is true then, when you are ready to cash in on advertising, your procedure should be in the nature of a prepared plan.

Take the article advertised and make a feature of it. Show it in your newspaper copy, if you are using this medium. Follow up your advertising of this article

by mentioning it in your letters; display it in your windows, and see that your clerks mention the article to every customer. The combination of all these forces creates what is known as demand, and your sales force makes the sale.

CHAPTER X.

Location of Store.

WHILE the location of a store is a big factor in merchandising, it is not always necessary, in order to do a big business, to be right on the main corner in the heart of the city. Those places are for cigar stores, drug stores and department stores, where the public find it necessary to make purchases every day. Plumbing and hardware stores may often be located advantageously a little off the main corners. Of course, the store should be on a street car line or on a street that is well traveled. But it must be remembered that John Wanamaker would sell lots of merchandise even if he was located on the river front. The old adage of "build a better mouse trap or preach a better sermon and, even though your house be built in the middle of the woods, the world will make a beaten path to your door," is as true today as when it was first uttered.

In a town in the northwestern part of Iowa there are four live plumbers doing business on the main street. They all seem to be good merchants and prosperous. There's also a plumber on a side street, three blocks away from Main street. His street is unpaved and the side walk is of clay, but this chap does more

business than all the Main street plumbers put together. He's a good plumber and a merchant, like the rest of them, but he knows how to tell folks about it.

In the plumbing business there are thousands of stores located in really fine places, which are doing practically no business because they don't try, and they will not let anyone else advise them. Most of them say, "If I were in a good location, I'd clean my windows and dress up the store, but this is a bad neighborhood and I couldn't make it pay."

There's no question, however, that, if these men would invest in a few buckets of water and several cakes of soap, they would not only surprise the people of their locality, but themselves as well. There's nothing so conducive to general interest as cleanliness. Many a plumber, who has a location that he *thinks* is bad, would surprise himself by trying this simple formula of soap and water.

There is room downtown in every large city for enterprising plumbers, but this is an evolution that time will bring about. The big thought is: Make the most of present locations and conditions, and then let natural progress follow its course.

Location, therefore, is a matter of pocketbook. We can't all be located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Broadway, in New York, and besides, if the plumbing

trade teaches its customers to buy from their neighborhood stores now, it will not be necessary later on to advertise as grocers and druggists are now doing to patronize the home community.

CHAPTER XI.

The Jobbing Plumber.

THE plumbing business may be divided into three classifications for the purpose of outlining suggestions for proper and effective merchandising: Jobbing plumber, merchant plumber and contracting plumber.

The jobbing plumber is one who depends largely upon repair work for his business. This class of plumbers, more than any other, is to blame for the low opinion in which the whole trade is held.

For one thing, this class is in the majority. The chief reason for this blame is this, that such a plumber has nothing to sell except labor, or rather has not attempted to sell anything but labor; he lets his shop run down and permits the odds and ends of his trade to accumulate in the shop and in the window, if he has one, until he has advertised the fact that he is an untidy business man.

He can correct this impression to his profit and satisfaction by becoming a student of merchandising.

If he will display in his window, the various articles he uses, as well as parts and replacements, and will see that each part is carefully ticketed, giving its name and price, and, if possible, state what it is used for, bearing in mind that the public as a rule does not know

the names and purposes of the parts, he will immediately gain the respect and confidence of his community. Repair work can be made highly profitable. By way of comparison, it may be mentioned that a humble cobbler in Florida made a fortune by window displays and advertising, backed by first-class service. His neat shop and careful catering to the wishes of his customers brought him repair work from a hundred miles around.

The jobbing plumber has unlimited opportunities for increasing his business and profits. Every time he is called upon to do a repair job, there exists an opportunity to sell some plumbing article to his customer. He is right on the ground. He has the confidence of his customer, and this will enable him to sell many of the useful and necessary plumbing specialties. There is also a chance to sell toilet seats, new bibbs for the kitchen sink, bath room accessories, etc. It would not be difficult for him to carry an assortment of these articles along when going on a repair job, and the profit would soon enable him to take his rank as a merchant.

There is one special branch of the jobbing plumber's business that seems to have been neglected. That is profits. Take the case of a leaking faucet. A customer calls up and wants the plumber to come at once. The plumber sends his journeyman, and the charge for the job rarely can be under a couple of dollars. Even at that, it is a rare case where the plumber figures the

actual amount of time his journeyman has spent on the job. Result, the master plumber is out of pocket. Now, if this plumber had told his customer that a washer would fix the leak and that the customer could put it on himself, then the transaction would have cost the customer only a few cents, and the plumber would have made a sure profit.

But that is not all. He would have established himself in the good graces of the customer and would be in line for some really profitable business. The next time when the leak occurred he could sell him a new faucet and anything else the customer needed.

The whole idea is that the jobbing plumber should keep his eye on the actual profit of each transaction rather than the amount of labor, because after all, labor is a very unstable commodity, and few, if any, ever make anything out of it.

CHAPTER XII.

The Merchant Plumber.

THIS is a new title for the general plumber who does contracting and some repair work. He maintains a store where fixtures are displayed. For the merchant plumber, window displays are indispensable. They are his contact with the public, and in them are reflected the kind of work he does and the character of service he renders. In Benjamin Franklin's time there was a saying that "fine clothes do not make fine gentlemen", but that was an ambiguous statement then as it is now. Fine gentlemen have a neat and clean appearance and always have had.

Window displays are the clothes of a retail store. You can usually judge the character of the proprietor by the way he presents himself to the public through the agency of his windows.

Neat windows bespeak neat work. Cleanliness in the window assures the home owner that this plumber will not litter up his house. Incoherent windows mean that the plumber will waste a lot of time running back and forth, and that the workmanship will not be anything to boast of.

Window displays that lack price cards on the fixtures indicate, first, a fear that his competitors will see the prices and undersell him. It indicates that he

is still old-fashioned and would rather do the work than sell the merchandise, and most of all, it indicates a very serious lack of knowledge of what the public wants, and therefore it is liable to cause the public to believe that he also lacks a knowledge of the mechanical side of this business.

The merchant plumber displays first all nationally advertised merchandise. He realizes that his display is the connecting link between the manufacturer and the consumer. He knows that the best photograph or artist's painting cannot convey to the minds of the laity the details and beauty of a plumbing fixture.

"An article nationally advertised and exhibited in a plumber's window is half sold."

The merchant plumber employs a clerk to operate his retail store. He has a big source of profit in the accessories which, although not expensive per unit, form a medium of advertising and profit.

Advertising, because the surest way to big things, is to do the small ones successfully. A well sold accessory creates a satisfied customer, and satisfied customers are the best advertising. Sale of accessories means profit, because the percentage on accessories is much larger than on fixtures. This department of the business has unlimited possibilities.

The writer would like to make a suggestion, in this connection, that will help plumbers to increase this part

of their business considerably: In most cases where bathroom accessories are sold, the journeyman is employed to install them. This seems a gross waste of valuable time and money. The journeyman is a plumber and is trained to do the engineering work of the business, which requires his skill and experience, but it is beyond comprehension why this high-class mechanic is ever employed at his high wages to install accessories. Why can't the merchant plumber employ a less experienced worker for this department of his business? It would at once enable him to handle this profitable line and would encourage more buying of such accessories from the plumbing trade.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Contracting Plumber.

THIS title fairly well describes a branch of the plumbing business—contracting. It has a big sounding effect, but what does it mean to the laity? After all, that's the only thing that counts. No matter what we as individuals think about anything, public approval or disapproval counts for most.

To the public it means a plumber who undertakes the bigger jobs. The very few people who come into actual business contact with the contractor know the various ramifications of this end of the sanitary business. But the public does not and will not know until it is permitted to see this branch, as it must see all branches of the plumbing business. Too often the business of the contractor is operated on a gambling basis. While it is true that more contractors carry stocks of material than any other division of the trade, with the exception of the supply house, yet a good percentage of contractors do business out of a catalog. Not having capital invested in merchandise often creates opportunity for temptation to gamble. Then, too, the speculative builder who takes a chance, encourages business of this sort.

The contracting plumber, as a rule, has fine office equipment, all the modern office appliances and office

helps, which make possible business on a large scale. In fact, the offices of the better contractors are as fine as the offices of any manufacturer or jobber.

These men are at the top of their profession. They not only know their business well, but have succeeded from a monetary point of view. But they all lack the one essential quality, that is going to change the entire attitude of the public towards the plumbing business, and that is advertising and merchandising.

Most of these men are content to wait until they are called upon, or they solicit business for jobs that are all cut and dried. Others who are not in the plumbing business do the deciding as to the quality of merchandise used in the work. So, you might say, that a contractor is largely a seller of expert labor. Would it not be wonderful, and it's downright practical too, if these highly educated and successful sanitarians had show rooms and would prove to the public—the fellows who, after all, pay the bills—that this or that fine plumbing fixture, although a little higher in first cost, is cheapest in the end because it wears better and longer, and always looks finer?

These men could show to advantage the artistic, modern bathrooms, the kind that are purchased because they are the best that money can produce, regardless of price. And there would be more of this kind sold if they would only let the public know that they were in existence.

At the Pittsburgh convention of the National Association of Master Plumbers, in 1920, there was a beautiful display of everything in the plumbing business, to which the public was invited. It was advertised as a Sanitary Exposition. The number of visitors who came was ample testimony that the public would like to know more about new sanitary appliances. One evening a wealthy lady, one of Pittsburgh's leading citizens, was found admiring a double drainboard, one-piece kitchen sink. When the salesman talked to her, she admitted that she never thought a kitchen sink could be so beautiful and useful. Now, this particular woman was the wife of a man who made his money in real estate, and she has, since his death, several years ago, operated the business. She confessed to having seen pictures of sinks in catalogs and advertising pages, but never could visualize how attractive and practical they were, until she actually stood in front of one.

This is only one instance of possibilities. There are thousands of them.

Take the contractor who specializes in factory work. Just stop and think of the hundreds of sanitary improvements that recent years have contributed to the welfare of the factory and mill workers: Drinking fountains, wash-ups, toilets, urinals, showers, all feature items, and all are necessary to the efficiency of the modern employer of labor. With a little advertising

and display, they could be used by the contractor as entering wedges for business. Business secured in this way is, after all, the most profitable kind all around. The element of bidding is eliminated in these direct sales. The contractor freely gives his best attention and work, and the buyer gets a complete job that will always be a source of satisfaction.

W.J. Daly Co.
PLUMBING

CHAPTER XIV.

The Small Town Plumber.

THE question has been discussed by students and psychologists: "Is there more ability than opportunity?" It's a big question and probably never will be answered.

One may have ability and not recognize opportunity. There is more opportunity where more people live, therefore, the big city plumber should have the largest average volume of business. But he doesn't. The largest volume of business per shop comes from the small town plumber.

There are several good reasons for this. In the first place he usually is so far away from his supply house that he can't buy from hand to mouth like his city cousin. When he buys, he orders enough material to cut down the delivery costs. Then a curious thing happens.

When the plumbing merchandise arrives, he does not hide it all in a warehouse. Instead he puts it on display in his store, with the result that he sells plumbing supplies all the time because he has them to sell.

Business is rarely dull with the small town plumber. Therefore, he has learned to be a merchant. Many a small town plumber was a merchant before the National Trade Extension Bureau became operative.

But his business is only in its infancy. There is developing in the country districts a wonderful opportunity for plumbing due to the invention of home water systems. When a small town plumber sells a water system to a customer, he is only starting. He sells the system to father who wants to save himself from carrying water to the stock, and also because he wants cheaper fire insurance.

But mother wants bathrooms, inside toilets, kitchen sinks, laundry tubs, and a hose to sprinkle her flower garden. So the plumber, who sells a water system, does a real stroke of business.

Then, too, the plumber in the smaller cities has developed to a great degree the sale of bathroom trimmings and accessories. He really never did let go of this profitable side of his business but has kept up his store sales. And it's a rare job in the country where the plumber does not include the bathroom accessories with the equipment in each sale.

During the prosperous period of farmers from 1917 to 1920, they went in for high-class merchandise. These people read the advertising columns of their magazines, and thus became familiar with the best grade of plumbing fixtures. Then when they saw the same fixtures on display in the plumber's shop, it was not difficult to convince them that the best is the cheapest.

Then there's the ever increasing field for the sale of electric light systems that will eventually find the progressive plumber the best channel of distribution. Manufacturers of these systems have been looking for the right dealers. They need a trade that has had the experience of the practical master plumber—men who can readily grasp the requirements of an installation.

Once this branch of work has been taken up, there's no limit to the possibilities. The dealer who installs the electric system is the man to sell all the electrical devices that go with it.

Probably the only fly in the ointment of the small town plumber is the mail order house. There was a time when mail order houses were considered a menace to trade generally. For a good many years it really looked like they were going to gather in all the trade of the rural communities and eliminate all retail stores. Their plumbing departments grew into doing millions of dollars of business per year. But what is happening to the plumber has already happened to all small town merchants.

When the mail order competition grew so strong that merchants couldn't stand the pace any longer, they did the only thing left to do, or go out of business. And that was to meet competition, not with price-cutting, but with service. They began to wash their windows, to throw away all the old, useless junk with

which their stores were formerly crowded, and began to sell their customers high-grade merchandise, plus service. That's something the mail order house cannot do. They could not render *personal* service. Now in every small town in the country, you'll find up-to-date retail stores selling high-grade merchandise, operated by men who, through the competition of mail order houses, were forced to become real merchants.

The modern merchant plumber has the experience of these men to draw from and is building his business along similar lines.

Therefore, when an investigator goes through the rural districts of America today, he'll find men who a few years ago were ready to condemn the mail order houses say, "Thank God for the M. O. H. They taught the public to buy better merchandise, and they forced merchants to become better business men."

CHAPTER XV.

The Journeyman Plumber.

SOMEONE once said that the journeyman of today is the master of tomorrow. We know that is true of the past, but will it continue to be so? A thorough knowledge of plumbing and sanitary engineering is, of course, very necessary, but the thought arises, wouldn't it be better for a man, who has decided to make plumbing his vocation, to study general business and then employ skilled plumbers to do the work for him?

The journeyman's greatest drawback is his union. Unionism is a wonderfully fine thing, but it often acts as a damper upon individual enterprise. The journeyman sells his labor at so much per hour regardless of the quality of his services.

There seems to be a happy solution. Acting on the thought that every man who takes up the work of plumbing some day hopes to became a master plumber, wouldn't it be a good idea to teach these men that a master plumber means a lot more than just efficiency with the tools? If journeymen could be taught to work on each job so efficiently and neatly that the job itself would be an advertisement for more work, then he would be learning the first steps of business.

The journeyman comes into contact with the master plumber's customers, and therefore, the master is gauged by the work the journeyman does. If the journeyman could be induced to regard himself as a promoter of business, it would help him and his craft tremendously.

The premise report card is a good example of what service a progressive journeyman can render. He is on the job, doing perhaps a minor repair. If he were to know that a master plumber almost always loses money on this kind of work, perhaps he'd be glad to make out a premise report card.

The report card system as advocated by the National Trade Extension Bureau is taken on the job by the journeyman. He makes note of what condition the fixtures are in. Is the toilet seat cracked? Have they a nice appearing medicine cabinet? Do they have sufficient towel bars and other bathroom accessories?

Has the family enough bathing facilities? Should they add another bathroom? Do they have a shower? Is the toilet up-to-date? What sort of a lavatory have they? Is the kitchen sink modern? And the laundry tubs, are they in good repair? Do they need a gas water heater?

There's no end to the report that an observing journeyman could bring back to the office after each job.

The merchant plumber should teach his journeymen

the vital importance of this kind of co-operation, even if he had to make a small payment for the extra service. Then when the journeyman observes the master plumber following up these leads in a practical and efficient manner, would it not create a better impression of the plumbing business in his mind? And wouldn't it put the business on a higher plane?

The master plumber can do much to create good plumbing merchants by showing his journeymen how to help along the business side of the profession.

For instance, if the master plumber had a clean, neat store, with fixtures well displayed, and made a business of selling them, would it not attract a better class of journeymen to his payroll?

There's no question that it would do wonders, first, for the immediate profit of the merchant, and, second, it would show the future generation of masters that it requires considerably more than a certificate and a kit of tools to become a master plumber.

It would be a paying investment in the quality of the work if the store and shop were kept in a neat and orderly manner. Students of psychology tell us that if you put a man to work in a shop, or from a shop, that is not orderly, and about which there is no air of business or management, that you can expect only poor work and confusion. On the other hand, men who work from a clean shop and store, where

everything is in order, are bound to carry that spirit to the job with them.

The merchandising idea pays in every department of the plumbing business. If the plumber will spend a few minutes a day showing his journeymen the advantages of the modern way of doing business, he will develop valuable assistants and will add many additional dollars to his yearly profits.

When a journeyman gets this spirit, he can be promoted a step farther. He may be given articles of merchandise that fit in with the work he is detailed on, and after the right kind of coaching he will be able to make sales.

When a merchant plumber stocks a new article, that he intends to make a drive on, he should, where practical, see to it that the journeyman carries a sample with him. This will add to the profits and make customers realize that the merchant plumber is progressive and has up-to-date merchandise. A small commission on each sale would stimulate the journeyman's effort, and many of them would become good salesmen. Then, when work became slack, the journeyman, instead of being laid off, could take out these salable articles and might often make more in commissions than his regular wages.

Under such conditions the journeyman of today *will* become the *real* master of tomorrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Metropolitan Plumber.

EVIDENTLY the average plumber in the large city does not know that thousands of dollars worth of good, profitable business is going by his store every day; passing by, without even knowing or suspecting that the articles they are going to purchase in some other line of trade may be had from the plumber.

In cities like Chicago, New York, Cleveland, Boston, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati, there are sold, every day in the month, enough bathroom accessories to pay, out of the profits, the rents of all the plumbers in these cities. Often the metropolitan plumber will say that he does not handle these articles because they are sold by department stores and hardware stores. Think of it, a man, in business to make money, will not sell an article because it is being sold outside of his craft. You'd think he was a member of a union from that kind of talk.

The only way to reconcile oneself to an assertion of this kind is to realize that the majority of plumbers do not understand merchandising. Manufacturers want to work with plumbers. Most of them prefer to market their product through plumbing channels, but to do this they must have the master plumber's support.

Just what are the chief reasons for the large city plumbers' refusal to handle merchandise over the counter?

Probably the underlying reason is that most city plumbers regard themselves as contractors and as such consider themselves above petty sales.

The second reason is that plumbers' associations in the cities are more thoroughly organized and old trade customs, which prevented sales of merchandise which did not include installation, became so much a part of the rules of the business that it is difficult to change them.

The third reason is because the supply houses obligingly maintain showrooms where the plumber can take his customers, thus eliminating the apparent necessity for a showroom of his own.

Fourth, most plumbers of today were journeymen yesterday. These men look at business through the eyes of labor. To them each job represents so many days' work.

Fifth, the practice of a majority of plumbers handling the tools themselves keeps them out of touch with modern business conditions. The man, who comes home physically tired at night, is in no frame of mind to study or read and plan.

Needless to say, none of these reasons hold water. They all stand squarely in the path of progress. In

the whole country there isn't a single plumber or contracting plumber or sanitary engineer, no matter what name he travels under, who could not be benefitted by advertising and merchandising.

The largest building contractors in the world keep up constantly a series of newspaper advertisements. They do this regardless of the fact that they have enough orders on their books to keep them busy for several years.

The big contracting plumber could, without hurting his pride, make displays of factory and office building plumbing that would yield him a big return on the investment. These men could educate their customers to demand the latest plumbing conveniences, which spell efficiency in office or factory. The local contractor, who successfully sells a medicine cabinet or bathroom scale, makes a profit and puts himself in line for big jobs later on.

The writer has said elsewhere that the American home built five or ten years ago did not have sufficient plumbing equipment. There are not enough bathrooms. The laundry and kitchen need up-to-date plumbing. The question is, how to reach these people.

The show window filled with attractive displays of bathroom accessories is a bait that will bring people into your store. Then they may be shown the display of the modern equipment.

Practically every family, that dwells in an apartment, has planned to have a home of its own some day. To become acquainted with these people, selling them some article that they may use that does not require installing, showing them that you like to serve, and presently, when they build a home, you will have their goodwill and receive the order for the new equipment. And in the meantime, selling accessories as an advertisement has been a paying proposition.

One more big reason why the metropolitan plumber should merchandise as well as his brother in the smaller towns and cities is this, that a good cash business over the counter can be made to be a regular, dependable thing. When this is established, there need be no fear of the building slumps that at present often interfere with the contractor's business for months at a time.

Truly, the metropolitan plumber has unlimited opportunities. His windows are valuable advertising space, and if based upon the number of passers-by or circulation they represent, the city plumber has a medium of creating a big local business.

CHAPTER XVII.

What Is to Become of the Alley Plumber?

WHEN the plumbing business has advanced far enough for the public to differentiate; when it will be forced to recognize that the plumbing trade is a business, then the alley plumber will disappear. The man, whose only stock in trade is a kit of tools, will find it necessary to seek employment as a journeyman with one of the more progressive plumbers.

Today the millionaire plumber (if one exists), the moderately successful plumber, and the plumber who has a hole in the wall, all look alike. There's nothing to choose from. Nearly all conduct their business alike, paying little or no attention to appearances. Consequently, under existing conditions, no plumber should object if the public refuses to make distinctions.

Once the new order is inaugurated, however, when the public learns that there are differences; that the plumber oftentimes is a merchant and has a bank account; that he stands for a big constructive part in the scheme of modern progress, then the alley plumber will be relegated to the class of the odd-job man.

The subject of eliminating the alley plumber has often been the subject of discussion either officially or just between groups of members of local plumbers'

associations. Mostly, however, the problem is handled as something that must be handled by legislation.

Credit ratings are mentioned; minimum stock of merchandise has been tried, but these methods are all arbitrary and force will positively not accomplish anything in America.

The answer is in the hands of every progressive man in the trade. Every clean window, every neat showroom, every effort to put the trade in the proper light before the public is a blow to the alley plumber.

So long as old-fashioned ideas prevail, he will tarry with the business, and as new ideas are adopted, he will go, and with the full acceptance of progressiveness by the whole trade he will never return.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Plumbing Supply Jobber.

IT has been and is the practice in the plumbing trade for the jobber to have a big display room, where plumbers can bring their customers. Because it is a universal practice in the business, no one seems to have considered its harmful effects. There's no harm in a showroom for dealers. In fact, it is a very necessary thing, but the basis upon which most supply house showrooms have been handled is harmful.

One of the fundamental reasons why the average plumber, and especially those located in big cities, are not merchants, is because the jobber's showroom has removed incentive for master plumbers to make displays of their own. Because there are only a few jobbers' showrooms, and as they are usually located in manufacturing or wholesale districts, the public has not been able to see the new styles in plumbing fixtures. Without display there can be no desire created for merchandise of this character, and when sales are not created, the only time fixtures are sold is in case of necessity—when building contracts are let.

The second important thing is the fact that, since the jobber has not distributed displays in all communities, the master plumber, not having a stock to dispose

of, neglects a golden opportunity because he has no investment to turn over.

In other chapters we deal with the possibilities of what the plumber could accomplish, if he were a merchant, and this chapter is written to show that the jobber is in a measure responsible for the lack of selling activity, due to the fact that plumbers have not been educated to carry their own stock.

Plumbing fixtures are beautiful merchandise. It is a rare case where sufficient fixtures are installed in a home. Because the customer has not been really sold on his needs, plumbing fixtures have usually been purchased from a cost of service point of view. Displays in plumbing shops distributed throughout the cities would give the public an opportunity of becoming familiar with the better class plumbing fixtures.

Just as people know by sight the makes of automobiles, they could in this way become familiar with the various makes of plumbing fixtures.

It is true that in most lines of merchandise the supply house salesmen are order takers. This is true primarily because the jobber's line is so big and it is always difficult to concentrate on any single item. On the other hand, jobber's men in other lines of business have been taught to educate their trade to better business methods. These other jobbers and their salesmen have learned that merchandise well displayed is half sold.

The secret of their merchandising ability, therefore, lies in the fact that they recognize that, by educating their customers to be better business men, they automatically increase each dealer's turnover, thus doing away with the fearsome task of specializing which so many are afraid of.

Because of the unfortunate conditions existing in the plumbing trade in the matter of merchandising, the burden of the work of teaching new methods and better business policies rests directly upon the shoulders of the jobber. In fact, it is his duty and privilege. The jobber is equipped with first hand information on the subject of cost accounting, he knows the value of window displays and is familiar with the market tendencies of various fixtures. At the present time many big sales of plumbing equipment are consummated in his showrooms, and his salesmen are all thoroughly informed on all these subjects. It is, therefore, within his province to pass along this knowledge to his dealers as a part of his service.

A leaf may be taken from out of the clothing men's business book on this subject. Here are developed in the highest possible manner the salesman advisors. The average retail clothing merchant gets ninety per cent of his merchandising ideas direct from the manufacturers' or jobbers' salesmen.

Most of the big men's clothing stores in this country are successes because they are backed, not financially, but morally, by the clothing jobbers and the manufacturers.

Jobbers' salesmen are prone to pay too much attention to the big things in the plumbing business. They do not realize the tremendous possibilities of the little things. This is due, no doubt, to the big building activities that occur periodically. Then, there are so many big orders for full equipment of rows of houses and blocks of apartment buildings that the average jobbers' salesman is able to select the plums he wants.

The one unfortunate thing about booms is, that they don't last, and then comes the long, lean period until the next boom. Sometimes, it's next year, and then again it may be several years before it comes around.

It is generally admitted that the country has now passed boom stages in the building line. There will be large building operations for many years to come, but it will not be nation-wide as in the past. It will be in localities here and there, widely separated. But the necessity for plumbing supplies will be increased because we, as a nation, are making progress. We'll find that in the homes now built there is need for more and better equipment.

In the past there was usually one bathroom to an eight or ten-room house. This seemed adequate at the time, but under modern circumstances, with the public demanding more bathing facilities, these homes will require more equipment and many bathrooms will have to be remodeled.

This will then furnish the backbone of the supply business—a business that will be regular and dependable. The jobbing concerns, therefore, who are first to grasp the idea, and who will adopt a policy of having their representatives become educators and will show their trade how to get this tremendous business, will be the big jobbing houses of the future.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Plumbing Supply Salesmen.

IN no other field of business do jobbers' salesmen have so much influence with their trade as those who represent the plumbing supply houses. This is probably due to the many factors that enter into an order of plumbing material. Sizes, shapes, quality and delivery must all be part of every order. Then there's the element of estimating, a task which, in a great many instances, falls upon the jobbers' representative. This kind of contact, which is more than order taking, builds up a confidence and respect for these men not equaled in any other business. If these men were fully convinced that merchandising pays, and recognized that it would increase their annual billing, then we would have here a direct line into the very heart of the plumbing situation.

If the supply houses would educate their salesmen to be missionaries of modern business methods, then direct sales would result, for here would be a word-of-mouth campaign to dealers from men in whom they have confidence.

Probably the only obstacle in the way is a mental hazard. Jobbers' salesmen are so close to the business and have usually been at it so long that the task seems hopeless. If these men can remember the electrician of

a few years ago and will observe the remarkable change that has occurred in that trade, they will begin to see the possibilities. And the older men will recall the old time "hand-me-down" clothier, who used to pull his customers in from the street. You can see what happened to that trade. Then came the drug trade and the hardware trade. All have progressed, and it is only fair to say that in each case a large percentage of the credit belongs to the jobbers' salesmen in these lines.

It may also be remarked that this is not working for glory, but is the very shortest cut to bigger and better billing.

The insurance simile is a good case in point. A certain insurance solicitor asked his manager for more territory. He said "he'd worked every prospect in his territory," which was twenty-five city blocks.

The manager's answer was to cut him down to one block and to ask the solicitor to call on every man in every building on every floor. In other words, concentrate. Result—he multiplied his business by five.

In a like manner, the jobber's salesman may increase his billing by helping each customer to increase his business.

These men should read up on window trimming and retail selling, become familiar with the best methods of displaying plumbing fixtures and of bringing customers into the plumbing stores to see the fixtures.

If each jobber's salesmen would make it a point of leaving a new selling idea with every customer at each call, the next time he comes around he'd be surprised to find that the idea had developed into an order.

CHAPTER XX.

The Manufacturers' Problem.

WHEN a new breakfast food is placed on the market, the manufacturer's salesmen show advance proofs of the advertising to the jobbers and retailers. Usually enough orders are received to make the advertising a success before a single package of the food is sold to the public or a line of the advertising has been published.

The tradesmen in question, knowing the value of advertising, are quick to take advantage of the manufacturer's advertising expenditure to attract the resultant demand to their stores.

This element of co-operation is lacking in the plumbing trade. Recently the writer made a trip over six states, visiting both jobbers and master plumbers. At the same time a large manufacturer was spending $6,000 a page each week to advertise in one of the big national weeklies, with millions of circulation. This advertising featured a beautiful and practical kitchen sink. He asked dilligently every person in the trade he came in contact with, if they had made any effort to cash in on this publicity. It is very much regretted that not one plumber or jobber in the territory seemed to know that the manufacturer was doing this advertising. Not one dealer in all that territory had a sign

in his window or a copy of the advertisement, much less a sample of the fixture.

This sort of thing stifles ambition. It is very discouraging to the progressive manufacturer and creates a temptation for him to go outside the trade to find a responsive market. Our larger manufacturers of bathroom accessories have already done this, and today department stores are selling these profitable, trade-building bathroom necessities. Few in the trade, either plumber or jobber, realize the tremendous volume of business bathroom accessories make. A faint idea may be had when it is known that some of the department stores in larger cities each year have a volume of sales as high as $100,000 in this department alone.

It is fundamentally necessary for manufacturers to educate the trade to the value of advertising. They must begin at the beginning and teach jobbers and their salesmen and the retail plumber. While this might seemingly be a difficult task, yet in reality it is comparatively easy. The profits to all concerned make it worth while, and the trade is fast awakening to the advantages of merchandising.

The trade must be taught to know that the big national magazines will not accept advertising copy, unless the article advertised has merit and that, in some instances, it has passed the test of their experts before it is allowed to appear in their columns.

No sensible manufacturer in these days of efficiency would think of trying to advertise an article that was not of unusual merit. Truth in advertising is not a phrase. It is the adopted slogan of the advertising business, not because it is moral, but because it pays. When the general trade knows these facts, then the manufacturer may merchandise his product by advertising to the public. He will then be assured that, when one of his prospective consumer customers calls upon the plumber, the article advertised will receive the proper presentation.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Biggest Business in the World.

CONSIDER what tremendous opportunities await the plumbing contractor who is too much alive to wait for building booms. The man who wants to do such work as he has landed through a successful bid, installing only such plumbing fixtures as some one else has selected, will not see it. But the up-to-the-minute merchant-contracting plumber is the business man who has probably the biggest business in the world waiting for him.

The need for merchandise that contractors should sell, that can not strictly be called plumbing supplies, is really awe inspiring.

Water heaters, both gas and kerosene, are a field in themselves. The local gas company usually has the business of gas water heaters cornered because it saw the opportunity to increase the consumption of gas. Many contractors had given up trying to get this business because the gas company looked big. But the need for them is so tremendous that most contractors have become convinced that if they will make a study of them as a business they will soon find that they can sell them as fast as the big companies and usually more satisfactorily. They also bring them into contact with customers for other fixtures.

Then there's the stationary vacuum cleaner. The portable electric cleaner has demonstrated its necessity and value to such a great extent that a live wire merchant should have no difficulty in showing his good trade the conveniences and comfort of having a *real* practical outfit, permanently installed.

To the plumber, who is interested in factory work, the bubbling fountain should appeal as real selling merchandise. He has every health agency on his side. He has as arguments, health and efficiency, and it is no difficult task to show any factory or office manager that a drinking fountain will quickly pay for itself in the health of his employees and the time saved each day.

Water softeners for estates and country houses. The field of electric pumps for water softeners is also undeveloped and offers exceptional opportunities. The city plumber can get the order for his client's country home.

Garbage burners are a highly profitable line to study up. This field has hardly been recognized, yet it fits right in with the opportunities of merchandising.

In the chapter on Sanitation and Hygiene, the subject of dental lavatories was touched upon. Merchandise of this character can be sold. The public is waiting to *see* such articles and appliances.

Now, of course, comes the big thought, how to sell these fixtures and appliances. First of all, it is necessary to select the type of fixtures you can conscientiously recommend, one that is reliable and will always stand as a monument and advertisement of your business. You should also select articles that are nationally advertised, as the manufacturer of advertised goods is always looking for a live wire to push his merchandise. And the demand created by the advertising is an asset to start with.

They should be well displayed in the window and showroom and prospective customers interested by advertising and personal solicitation. Most of the appliances mentioned in this chapter would sell on sight, if backed by a well chosen sales talk as to their need.

It's quite remarkable how little the public actually knows about fixtures of this sort. One reason why more have not been sold is that there has been no one to sell them, and the public has never seen them except in catalogs, which do not mean anything.

Some of the articles mentioned in this chapter could be sold on credit or time payments. This may be either handled with your own banker or through one of the many institutions that take the details off the hands of retailers.

Every contracting plumber should thoroughly realize just how the water heater business almost got away

from the plumbing business, and then take steps to bring it back.

A water heater is merchandise. The manufacturers realize the tremendous possibilities and have prepared selling advertising campaigns accordingly. But plumbers would not carry them in stock. They thought they could sell them in the old-fashioned way of calling the jobber to deliver one on the job after a sale was made out of a catalog, or perhaps after one was sold through the advertising. But that's a very slow way of doing business. It's a penny ante game. And the manufacturer was not content. He knew that big sales could be made, and he wanted them right away. In fact, he couldn't keep his business going on the few the plumbers were selling. So the gas company came along, saw the wonderful idea and realized that here was another way to increase the use of gas, so they sold heaters.

To do this they bought large quantities and *put them on display*. They made window displays and did newspaper advertising, and, since water heaters are a very necessary item in the comfort of the home, they sold them.

The fact that plumbers have said they would not buy this or that make of heater, because the gas company sells them, does no harm to the manufacturer. It only harms the plumber, who is not merchant enough

to see that he can get this business, if he will reach out his hand for it.

It is a very practical demonstration of the fact that merchandise properly displayed is half sold.

The need for all these articles is present. The only thing left is for a new generation of contracting plumbers to turn this need into the biggest business in the world. And that, besides profits, means bringing health, happiness and comfort to the world.

CHAPTER XXII.

Comfort Stations.

EVERY comfort station is a monument to the advancement of civilization. No person can estimate the suffering and disease and even deaths caused by the absence of these necessary conveniences. We are only beginning to understand their vital necessity. Every medical authority endorses them in the most enthusiastic terms.

It is the duty of every one connected with the business of manufacturing or selling sanitary plumbing to bring to the attention of the public the need for public comfort stations. Here is a great opportunity for the trade to demonstrate that concerted effort, for the good of the public, will result in good-will for the much-abused plumbing profession.

Every comfort station will be an advertisement of the work that the plumber does. They will be constant reminders that the plumber plays an important part in the protection of the public's health. Here is a real opportunity for the trade to do a tremendous thing. Every plumbers' association should make it part of its program to interest the mayors of cities and those in authority in the absolute necessity of these vital conveniences.

The idea of the comfort station may extend itself

into the heretofore untried field. Every retail store should have its comfort stations. And it should not be difficult for the merchant plumber to sell the idea to store owners. Conveniences of this sort are added service, and every progressive merchant will agree that successful business is built upon service. Therefore, the store owner should install comfort stations for the convenience of his patrons, because it pays.

If the merchant plumber will prepare, or have prepared by manufacturers of comfort station equipment, plans that will show the various combinations and approximate cost of fixtures, and if the plumber will set up in his window or shop a complete store comfort station outfit, put on appropriate signs and follow-up by letters to a selected list of prospects and then make personal calls thousands of dollars worth of equipment could be sold in a short space of time. And the profit to the plumber and the satisfaction to the owner would make each transaction a pleasant one.

Then there's an extra profit. An advertising profit. Think of the thousands of people who will use these store comfort stations and who, perhaps for the first time, come into contact with really up-to-date toilets and lavatories.

This would be a great education to many people. If the plumber had his name and address on a neat brass sign put up in each station, he would soon find that

this would help his business along. Then, if he had on hand in his store fixtures like those in the station, and with prices on them, he'd soon make sales to home owners.

This once more demonstrates the value of merchandising. The plumbing business has the additional opportunity to sell merchandise to a public that is waiting to be told what the plumber can do for them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The National Trade Extension Bureau.

THE most forward-looking move in the plumbing business is the National Trade Extension Bureau. Here is the shrine at which the pilgrims of progress worship. This bureau has the full endorsement of every branch of the industry. Every trade association is affiliated, and a large percentage of manufacturers and jobbers are contributors and supporters.

The Bureau is entirely educational. Everyone in the plumbing business who reads its literature is bound to be benefitted.

The Bureau distributes literature on every subject pertaining to the sanitary business, from a complete, modern, efficient bookkeeping system to a letter on how to sell a water system. It's a business college with a diploma of success as a reward to those who take advantage of its teachings.

It is noteworthy that this Bureau, which teaches bookkeeping, accounting, letter-writing, how to collect outstanding accounts, how to make window displays, how to do local newspaper advertising and to write direct by mail advertising letters and many other helps, gives its services to those who ask without cost. If one had to spend the time and money and go to a school, buy the books to study exactly the same things

that are taught by the National Trade Extension Bureau, it would cost over a thousand dollars in time and money, yet here it is offered without cost.

Perhaps that is one reason why its efforts are not more thoroughly appreciated. There's something about getting things free that the average American does not understand.

In some quarters there seems to be a deliberate misunderstanding of the National Trade Extension Bureau. This organization is owned by the plumbing trade at large and operated for the benefit of everyone in the trade. Every individual success is a success for the Bureau and every failure is also a failure for the Bureau.

There is considerable talk about educating the plumber up to business standards. This is all very well, and there lives no man who cannot be taught something more about his business. But plumbers are not children. They are men who should be given the cold facts of trade extension, and every manufacturers' and jobbers' salesman should be instructed to promote the cause along a little faster.

In these days of rapid merchandising, there's no sense in slowly educating a trade. The idea is either right or wrong. Now trade extension has the backing of the best minds in the plumbing industry. Therefore, it requires action. A million dollars in the hands

of the Bureau could be spent and with only progress to report, but if the manufacturers and jobbers of plumbing materials were to step in and lend their help, not money or moral support, these items are only incidental, lend their physical help, trade extension would be a tremendous success in six months. Then, when every dealer in the trade was fully alive to modern business methods, tremendous campaigns could be inaugurated. Then the officers of the Bureau would have the opportunity of paying big dividends to each member or contributor, in increased business.

And lastly, the local plumbers' associations should do their share of this work. Here and there some lectures are given by the local officers. There are, however, not many instances on record where invitations have been extended to jobbing houses to send their salesmen to the meeting or to ask these institutions, who certainly are in position to know the business of merchandising, to delegate a man to make occasional talks.

There is too much secrecy. We must all come out in the open, and all together work for trade extension, which is another way of working to better our own conditions.

CHAPTER XXIV.

What a Plumber Sells.

THE sanitary business should begin with its name. The public is accustomed to associate distinct ideas with various trades. The word plumber calls to mind a dingy shop that hasn't been cleaned for months. Windows are dirty, fixtures, if any, in the windows are spotted with dust and grime. It's a place to pass by and avoid. This description need not give offense to the progressive modern sanitary engineer who has cleaned up. Impressions of a class are not formed by the conduct of one individual, but rather by the conduct and appearances of the whole trade.

The word sanitary calls to mind a picture of cleanliness, more than clean, hygienic. It's a curious thing that the very men who are responsible for the most cleanly room in our homes should not themselves inhabit a clean place of business.

When the jeweler wishes to sell a fine jewel or a piece of art work he puts it into an attractive setting, surrounds it with an atmosphere that will reflect and enhance its beauty and value.

The bathroom is the moral foundation of our homes, and it is no platitude to repeat that cleanliness is next to Godliness. It is an unvarnished truth. People, who

are clean by nature or environment, when in need of plumbing fixtures, pass up plumbing stores that are not clean. On the other hand, when passing a display of plumbing fixtures that is clean and shown amid clean surroundings, they can't resist the temptation to stop. They are attracted by cleanliness. The plumber has the opportunity to play upon a human frailty. Most Americans are educated to cleanliness. The more we bathe, the more we want to bathe. It's a habit that grows.

The plumber does not sell tubs and sinks and pipe and fittings and valves. He sells the service they render. He sells hygiene and cleanliness.

He has something every one wants. In other lines of trade the manufacturers and dealers must stimulate demand by tremendous advertising campaigns to force the buying. The plumbing trade has survived because it has something the people need.

There's no end to the possibilities of the plumbing business. There's billions of dollars worth of opportunity in every state in the Union. A sanitarian, who fully realizes the vastness of the opportunities, could start from his front door, go in either direction, stop at the first house and show the people of that home the need for hundreds of dollars worth of up-to-date, necessary sanitary improvements. This is no idle dream. It's cold, hard facts. It's like digging down

into a gold mine and finding a rich vein open to sight, ready to be lifted out.

This opportunity exists in no other business. Food, clothing and shelter, the three fundamental needs of men, are all overworked. Competition is keen and big effort is needed to win. The luxury trades and manufacturers of fancy goods are all highly specialized. They have succeeded only by the hardest kind of planning and work.

But the need for sanitation in our homes is unending. The need is not created by force. It is fundamental. The plumber can sell it, will sell it, and when he does, his trade will become a profession. It is really more important than making laws, because the cleaner we become bodily, the cleaner we are mentally, and the less use we will have for laws.

CHAPTER XXV.

How To Accomplish These Ideals.

EVEN though there hasn't been any great physical awakening in the plumbing business, there has been a mental change. Everywhere there's talk of better business and trade extension.

To put any of these ideals into practice, there's one thing left to do.

Action!

Those men, who say it can't be done, should get out of the business. There's no room for them. "Can't" is a word that doesn't exist in any red-blooded American's dictionary.

It must be admitted that the task is a difficult one. It does no harm to know what kind of a hill we have to climb.

Members of master plumbers' associations must cease doing business on a trade's union basis. They must realize they are business men and not laborers.

There should be no more resolutions or agreements not to sell some particular article, because the manufacturer sells it outside of the plumbing trade. They must realize that the manufacturer wants to have every sale that's possible, and if plumbers will not do the selling, then the manufacturer must forget the plumber

and remember the public, which has put a stamp of approval upon his article.

Take the case of water heaters. The trade in some cities has lost lots of business because it would not sell them in quantities. The plumber sold them in terms of labor for installation instead of as a necessary fixture. But, regardless of the plumber, the demand existed, hence, in some instances, water heaters were sold through other channels. Bathroom accessories is another item. Millions of dollars' worth of this profitable merchandise is sold annually outside of the trade. Some of the manufacturers of the very finest grades of these fixtures do not even call upon the plumbing trade. They prefer to deal with department stores.

Small fittings worth millions of dollars are being sold by trades other than the plumber's.

These conditions cannot be changed by resolution of any association of plumbers. But they can and will be changed by the demand of action. Show the manufacturers that the plumbing trade is ready to take these lines over, and they'll be glad to help. Once the plumbing trade will demonstrate that it can be depended upon, the manufacturers will quickly change their plans of distribution.

There's no use arguing the question. The time for arguments is past. Every day that goes over our

heads sees manufacturers preparing to broaden their selling channels. This must be stopped, and it can be stopped by immediate concerted action.

Then comes the big thing, the important one, price. One hundred per cent gross profit added on to the cost of plumbing fixtures is too much. It's unfair to the public and it defeats its own purpose. Of course, under present conditions, the plumber who spends most of his time installing fixtures must have one hundred per cent or go under. He should have several hundred per cent. But if he is ever going to be a merchant, he must learn to do business nearer to fifty per cent gross profit and turn over his merchandise more frequently. We've all heard too much talk about plumbers' prices. We must have profits, but we must not be usurers.

From now on a display in a plumber's window must mean that it is merchandise being offered for sale. Old fashioned and obsolete fixtures must be eliminated from sight.

If ten thousand plumbers, in the next six months, repainted their store fronts, decorated their show windows, and put signs on their merchandise, we'd get visions of nearing the ideal.

And it should always be remembered that the best thing about any business is its good-will. Let every one connected with the sanitary trade, master plumbers

and their journeymen and helpers, their clerks and bookkeepers, jobbers and their salespeople, manufacturers and their representatives, strive by concerted effort to build good-will. Let us show the public that the business of sanitary engineering is a modern, progressive business.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The "Bath a Day" Campaign.

FROM the beginning of the movement to merchandise the plumbing business it has been apparent that in order to crystallize the various plans and ideas, something tangible was necessary, something that would be understood by all elements in the trade, and which could readily be grasped by the public, a sort of vehicle of expression.

The "Bath a Day" Campaign is the result of this necessity. It condenses the activities of the entire sanitary trades into a definite effort. It is something that has the unqualified endorsement of the public, the press, and the medical profession.

Although bathing is more widely indulged in, although there are more bathing facilities in America than in any other country, yet few people realize the tremendous benefits that accrue from frequent bathing.

When "Domestic Engineering" presented the idea of daily bathing to the trade as a basic plan upon which to improve the plumbing business, thousands of letters were received from members of the plumbing trade; they came from every corner of the country. One of the most interesting and probably the most practi-

cal reply came from a branch manager of a large Western supply house. He wrote, "Let us conduct this 'Bath a Day' Campaign regardless of personal profits, for after all, if the campaign is to be sound and beneficial to the trade as a whole, then it must first of all be of benefit to the public." Most of those engaged in the plumbing business agree with this Western jobber, and it is indicative of its personnel to have such an expression at the psychological moment of the launching of the movement.

Here is a brief history of the idea which was announced in the columns of "Domestic Engineering," November 27, 1920, and which received the immediate endorsement of the entire trade.

Never before in the history of the plumbing business did so many of its members agree upon a single idea.

Plumbers' associations passed resolutions of commendation; the public press published articles upon the subject; doctors and health officials added their approval; many plumbers who had been taking only a passive interest in the Trade Extension Movement became active in promoting the Daily Bath Idea.

It went farther, soap manufacturers and underwear manufacturers saw in the idea a definite help to their business and they too are working to spread the good news.

Then came the need for a slogan. One was adver-

tised for broadcast, and at a meeting of executives of the National Trade Extension Bureau, held at Evansville, Ind., after considering several thousand slogans, which had been submitted by the trade and advertising men in various fields, the slogan, "A bath a day keeps you fit every way" was adopted.

Now this slogan is appearing on the literature of most firms engaged in the plumbing business. You'll find it in the form of transparent decalcomania signs on plumbing store windows; it is painted on the sides of plumbing delivery wagons and trucks; attractive two-color slogan stickers are pasted on every article of plumbing merchandise that goes out of a plumbing store, and in a very few months close to 3,000,000 of these stickers were used.

Many of the manufacturers who do national advertising incorporate the slogan in their advertising copy.

This propaganda is having its effect. The National Trade Extension Bureau adopted the week of June 27 to July 2 as "Take a Bath Every Day" Week. During this week a nation-wide drive was instituted to let every person in the United States know definitely that a bath a day keeps you fit every way. Circulars, newspaper advertising, window display, large posters and moving picture slides were used.

The net result more than justified the effort. It has

taught every member of the plumbing business that the public is ready to be educated to better bathing facilities; it has taught the public that the plumbing business is operated for the benefit of the public. It is a great step forward in the betterment of national health.

What a Bath a Day Will Accomplish.

Twenty-five years ago the City of Chicago was a very unsanitary place, more typhoid cases were recorded there than in any other city in the country; people died like flies; one summer almost every other house had crepe on the front door.

A sanitary board was organized. The refuse and sewage of the city were transferred to a canal that carried it away. Streets and alleys were cleaned and washed or sprinkled frequently. In other words, Chicago was cleaned and given a bath every day, so to speak. Today Chicago is one of the healthiest cities in America; that's what bathing does to a city. Every individual is just like the city of Chicago.

The pores of the skin are constantly throwing off poisons, a bath a day washes away these impurities and keeps the skin healthy. The constant contact with water at different temperatures has a tendency to cause the muscles to relax and the blood to circulate freely, thus a bath a day may be said to keep the bather in good health.

How Will the Trade Profit?

As the Western jobber wrote, "let us conduct this campaign without considering the personal profit." This is the surest way to public confidence, and when this is once earned, the plumbing trade will reap a profit, because of its altruism.

Once the public has realized the necessity of a daily bath, when people actually begin to practice daily bathing, then they will awaken to the realization that not a single home in America has sufficient bathing facilities.

Today when the details of building a home are being considered, too often the plumbing supplies are subjected to a bidding process that usually results in cheap fixtures as well as an inadequate number.

This is due to lack of knowledge on the part of the owner, the architect, and even the plumbing contractor, as to just what constitutes sufficient bathing facilities. But when the "Bath a Day" idea has gone over, and it is generally accepted as a necessary thing, then the owner will insist upon a liberal supply of every fixture that goes to maintain the new standard of health and efficiency for his family or tenants, as the case may be, for his family because he wants his wife and children to have everything that will maintain their health, and for his tenants because healthy tenants are sure to pay their rent.

Every department of the plumbing trade will thus be stimulated with this public demand for more and better plumbing fixtures. There will be a demand for better fixtures and better workmanship. Because of the increased interest in plumbing fixtures, the public will know more about plumbing installation, consequently, will only be satisfied with a high standard of workmanship; just as the average citizen today knows considerable about the details of automobile construction.

People no longer buy automobiles because they are cheap, they want to know what service they will render; just so will they want to know how the plumbing they buy today will perform ten years from now, and how much trouble it will cause in the meantime.

How To Hasten These Results.

The slogan "A Bath a day keeps you fit every way," has served its purpose. It has demonstrated that the plumbing trade from manufacturer down to journeyman could act in concert, if the idea to work upon was big enough. It has shown the public that the plumber has a great service to render.

A new slogan should be created, and this new slogan should eliminate an attempt at poetry, it should confine itself to a few words and it should be a direct command.

A direct command is not necessarily arbitrary, not if the command is a general appeal. For instance, "Take a bath every day," would be ideal, because it could be used in so many ways in connection with advertising copy and general articles on the subject.

The trade has had a one-week campaign on the subject, but the idea is too vital and too far-reaching to stop at that, it should have a whole month of prodigious campaigning, and it should have six months of advance preparatory work.

Then as a follow-up there should be a "Bath a Day" week every year. The idea is the most important one ever submitted to the trade. It has a far-reaching influence, since it affects everyone, rich and poor alike; and since it is ultimately for the good of all the people it should be handled in the biggest possible way.

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